

**NOVEMBER 2003 AGENDA**

SUBJECT	X	ACTION
	X	INFORMATION
		PUBLIC HEARING
Reading First Program--Including, but not limited to, approval of proposed amendment to the California Reading First Plan pursuant to Chapter 773, Statutes of 2003 (AB 1485).		

Recommendation:

Approve the AB 1485 amendments to Approved Reading First Plan and direct staff to immediately transmit the amended Plan to the United States Department of Education for approval.

Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action

The Board approved California's Reading First Plan at its May 2002 meeting. The United States Department of Education (USDE) approved the plan in late August 2002. At its April 2003 meeting, the Board approved emergency regulations to clarify how classrooms operated pursuant to Education Code Section 310 could participate in the Reading First Program. In essence, the Board took the position that English learners should be given 2 ½ hours of reading instruction in English for the waiver classroom to be eligible to participate in the program. By the June 2003 meeting of the Board, AB 1485 had been amended to deal with the same issue as the emergency regulations. However, AB 1485 explicitly allows classrooms operated pursuant to Education Code Section 310 to participate in Reading First without the Board's restriction that the English learners receive a specified amount of time of instruction in English. The Board deferred action on the permanent regulations to allow time for AB 1485 to complete the Legislative process.

Summary of Key Issue(s)

Assembly Bill 1485 (Firebaugh) was signed into law and will become operative January 1, 2004. The portions of AB 1485 relating to the Reading First Program direct the State Board of Education to send an amendment of the Reading First Plan to the United States Department of Education (USDE) that would allow the use of approved alternate format *SRA Open Court Reading 2002* and Houghton Mifflin *A Legacy of Literacy 2003* in classes operating pursuant to Education Code Section 310 (Prop 227 waiver classrooms). Currently the only approved alternate formats for these instructional materials are in Spanish, but AB 1485 also directs the SBE to determine if there is a demand for other translations. Until this amendment is approved by the USDE, AB 1485 would prohibit expenditure of the over \$13 million in additional Reading First funds California received for 2003-2004.

While AB 1485 does not take effect until January 1, 2004, waiting until that time to comply with the requirements of the bill would make it difficult for schools to utilize the funds in an effective manner. Therefore, a meeting of the Reading and Literacy Partnership Team has been scheduled for October 27, 2003, to review the Reading First

Summary of Key Issue(s)

Plan amendment. Once approved by the Board, the amendment will be sent immediately to USDE with the request that the USDE review the amendment as expeditiously as possible.

Once the amendment is approved, existing Reading First districts will be allowed to add Prop. 227 waiver classrooms using the approved alternate format instructional materials to their Reading First Program and their 2003-2004 grant amount will be increased accordingly. The process and application for these district program revisions will be developed shortly so that classrooms can be added as soon as the plan amendment is approved by the USDE. The process and application will be limited to ensuring that any new classrooms will adhere to the program assurances in California's Amended Reading First Plan.

The California Technical Assistance Center (C-TAC) and the Regional Technical Assistance Centers (R-TACs), which provide technical assistance to potential and existing Reading First LEAs, have been informed of AB 1485, its content, status and related implementation. The CDE will alert districts when the Plan amendment is approved and provide instruction on how to add Prop. 227 waiver classrooms with the approved alternate formats to their existing Reading First program. These waiver classrooms will receive the same support as other Reading First classrooms and in return they will be expected to meet all the requirements of Reading First, including using research-based strategies and materials and having children meet grade-level English-language arts standards by the end of third grade, as demonstrated through the California STAR program. All approved classrooms will be included in the local and state evaluations to determine future funding in years 3 - 6, so all classrooms are held to the same high expectations for improving students' reading skills and bringing all students to state standards as measured by our state assessment.

Eligible school districts currently not participating in the Reading First Program will have an opportunity to apply for Reading First funding for the 2004-2005 school year. In addition, there will be a process for existing Reading First districts to add schools in 2004-2005 to their Reading First program that were not originally included based on the understanding that waiver classrooms would not receive funding. It is anticipated that the application process for those grants will begin in early winter, with notification of successful grant applicant in spring 2004. More detailed information on this grant process should be available in the next few months.

Fiscal Analysis (as appropriate)

Approval of the AB 1485 plan amendments by the State Board of Education and the USDE will allow expenditure of \$13.6 million in Reading First funding.

Attachment(s)

[Proposed Letter to the USDE outlining the amendments to California's Approved Reading First Plan.](#)

Draft AB 1485 Reading First Plan Amendment

Christopher J. Doherty
Director, Reading First
United States Department of Education

Dear Mr. Doherty,

This letter is to request approval of an amendment to California's Approved Reading First Plan (Approved Plan) to allow the use of Spanish translations of the scientifically research based instructional materials currently included in the Approved Plan. This request results from the enactment of Chapter 773, Statutes of 2003 (Assembly Bill 1485) by the California Legislature that required this amendment to California's Reading First Plan. The State Board of Education, as the State Education Agency, approved this amendment at its November 2003 meeting on the recommendation of the Reading and Literacy Partnership Team. Since California's Reading First Plan was approved in late August 2002, the two adopted instructional materials, Houghton Mifflin Reading, *The Legacy for Literacy 2003* and SRA/McGraw-Hill, *Open Court Reading 2002*, which are the scientifically research-based cornerstone of California's Approved Plan, have been translated into Spanish. These translations, *Houghton Mifflin Reading/Houghton Mifflin Lectura*, grades K-6, and *SRA/McGraw Hill Open Court Reading/Foro abierto para la lectura*, grades K-6, have been approved by the California Department of Education as alternate format instructional materials. Approximately 10 percent of California's English learners are educated in classrooms that use a language other than English for instruction pursuant to a waiver provision in Education Code Section 310 (added by Proposition 227 passed by the voters in 1998). These Education Code Section 310 classrooms that serve Spanish-speaking students can now use these approved alternative format instructional materials to teach reading.

As specified in Chapter 773, Statutes of 2003 (Assembly Bill 1485), California now wishes to amend its Reading First Plan to allow the use of these alternate format instructional materials in Education Code Section 310 classrooms to allow those students who are being taught to read in Spanish to continue to do so and still participate in the Reading First Program. California's amended Plan will continue to require that the goal of Reading First – that all students meet state grade-level standards as demonstrated through state assessments by the end of the third grade – be met by students using the alternate format materials. As in our original approved Reading First Plan, **all** California students in Reading First will be required to meet grade level English-language arts standards by the end of third grade, as demonstrated through the California STAR test.

The amended Plan is attached. A description of each amendment, by section, follows.

D. Criteria for Awarding Subgrants (page 8 of Approved Plan)

Criterion ii: Instructional Assessments (page 10 of Approved Plan)

California's Approved Plan utilizes assessments for screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring, and outcome. Reading First LEA's are guided to conduct assessments for all of the key technical skills of reading as specified in California's *Framework: Assessment Schedule for Grades K-3—Assessment of Proficiency in the Language Arts*.

Like their non-Education Code Section 310 classroom counterparts, Education Code Section 310 classrooms in the Reading First Program will utilize the extensive assessment materials included in the instructional materials. They will also have the State provided end-of-year assessments associated with the two approved instructional programs once they are translated into Spanish. These assessments will be augmented by nationally recognized scientifically research-based assessments in Spanish chosen by the Reading First LEA from a State Approved list.

As with all K-3 students in California, all Reading First students, including those in Education Code Section 310 classrooms, will take the California Standards Test in English-Language Arts to determine if the students are reading at grade level by the end of the third grade.

Criterion iii: Instructional Strategies and Programs (page 11 of Approved Plan)

Because *Houghton Mifflin Reading/Houghton Mifflin Lectura*, grades K-6, and *SRA/McGraw Hill Open Court Reading/Foro abierto para la lectura*, grades K-6, programs are translations of the two State-adopted comprehensive K-3 reading/language arts programs discussed in this section, they provide the same instructional strategies and programs discussed in this section of the Approved Plan.

Criterion iv: Instructional Materials (page 12 of Approved Plan)

Because the *Houghton Mifflin Reading/Houghton Mifflin Lectura*, grades K-6, and *SRA/McGraw Hill Open Court Reading/Foro abierto para la lectura*, grades K-6, programs are translations of the two State-adopted comprehensive K-3 reading/language arts instructional materials discussed in this section, they provide a comprehensive reading/language arts program in Spanish with English language development instruction. Of course since the required outcome is to have the students meet grade level English-language arts standards by the end of third grade, as demonstrated through the California STAR test, students using *Houghton Mifflin Reading/Houghton Mifflin Lectura*, grades K-6, and *SRA/McGraw Hill Open Court Reading/Foro abierto para la lectura*, grades K-6, may want to transition to the English version of the adopted materials prior to the third grade assessment.

The Approved Plan requires that LEAs already have the required instructional materials as a prerequisite for entering the program. Therefore under the Approved Plan, LEAs are not allowed to purchase classroom sets of the instructional materials. Because the

Education Code Section 310 classrooms may desire to have both the Spanish and English version of the instructional materials, Reading First LEAs will be allowed to use their Reading First funds to purchase the second set of instructional materials, whether it be English or Spanish for the Education Code Section 310 classrooms.

Criterion v: Instructional Leadership (page 13 of Approved Plan)

In addition to the leadership responsibilities outlined in the Approved Plan, both the LEA and site level instructional leadership will need to support Education Code Section 310 classroom teachers in the use of the instructional materials in Spanish with the substantial English language development component and preparing students so that they can score at or above the proficient level on the third grade California Standards Test in English-Language Arts. The amendments also make clear that school-wide focus on improving student achievement in reading must include all teachers and students whether they are in Education Code Section 310 classrooms or non- Education Code Section 310 classrooms.

Another amendment to this section is to suggest the LEAs consider including an Education Code Section 310 classroom teacher on the district-wide Reading First Leadership Team.

Criterion vi: LEA and School Based Professional Development (page 16 of Approved Plan)

The AB 466 Professional Development program, which is instructional materials specific, is the program required for the first year of Reading First professional development. It is our understanding that many existing Reading First schools have already included their Education Code Section 310 classroom teachers in their Reading First Professional Development to support the whole school reform that a successful Reading First Program requires. We will continue to encourage this team approach to professional development for the same reason.

Additionally, the State Board of Education, the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Technical Assistance Center (C-TAC) will work to encourage an LEA or private vendor to become an approved AB 466 Professional Development Provider for the approved alternate format instructional materials, as required under AB 1485.

Criterion vii: LEA Based Technical Assistance (page 17 of Approved Plan)

C-TAC (California Technical Assistance Center) and the R-TACs (Regional Technical Assistance Centers) will assist Reading First LEAs to build capacity to assist Education Code Section 310 classroom teachers use the alternate format instructional materials and with their implementation of the Reading First Program.

Criterion viii: Evaluation Strategies

Successful LEAs must include an evaluation strategy in their Reading First program that provides a means for the LEA to monitor program implementation and utilize assessments to assist in student learning. Of course this evaluation strategy must include

data from every participating classroom. In addition to including the Education Code Section 310 classrooms in their overall evaluation, LEAs must review the data from Education Code Section 310 classrooms as a subgroup since program monitoring and technical assistance will be important to ensure that the students can be successful on the California Standards Test in English-Language Arts by the spring of third grade.

Criterion xi: Competitive Priorities (page 19 of Approved Plan)

Because California's Approved Reading First Plan did not allow the funding of K-3 classrooms that utilized the approved alternate format instructional materials, those classrooms have not been funded in previous rounds of subgrants. Chapter 773, Statutes of 2003, (AB 1485) seeks to compensate for this lack of past funding by giving these classrooms priority in the allocation of the \$13.6 million increased funding provided to California in FY 2003. Thus, additional points will be awarded to passing applications that include Education Code Section 310 classrooms utilizing the alternate format instructional materials.

Section II State Leadership and Management (page 22 Approved Plan)

A. Professional Development Plan

The existing State structure for professional development under AB 466 that is described in the Approved Plan allows for professional development providers to be approved for any adopted instructional materials. Because *Houghton Mifflin Reading/Houghton Mifflin Lectura*, grades K-6, and *SRA/McGraw Hill Open Court Reading/Foro abierto para la lectura*, grades K-6, are approved alternate format instructional materials, providers can be approved under AB 466 to conduct 40-hour teacher institutes on these instructional materials. Currently there are no AB 466 providers for the alternate format. The State Board of Education, the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Technical Assistance Center (C-TAC) will work to encourage an LEA or private vendor to become an approved AB 466 Professional Development Provider for the alternate format instructional materials. Alternatively, because the alternate format is a translation of the adopted instructional materials in English, the 40-hour teacher institutes on the instructional materials in English is of benefit to teachers using the translated instructional materials.

B. Technical Assistance Plan

C-TAC (California Technical Assistance Center) and the R-TACs (Regional Technical Assistance Centers) will assist Reading First LEAs to build capacity to assist Education Code Section 310 classroom teachers use the alternate format instructional materials and implement the Reading First Program.

Section III Evaluation and Reporting Plan (page 27 Approved Plan)

California's Approved Plan includes an evaluation plan comprised of five components. Each of these five components will report on all the funded Reading First classrooms as a

whole, as well as the Education Code Section 310 classrooms as a subgroup.